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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

First Society of Free Enquirers,

IN BOSTON.

On Sunday, July 4, 1830:

BY R. L. JENNINGS.



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ADDRESS.

ONCE more a year has rolled round, and this great nation celebrates a day which millions yet unborn will hail as blessed. A day snatched from the calendar of time, raised above all its fellows, and consecrated to thy service—fair goddess of Liberty!

Once more a year has rolled round, and this great nation lives a progressively free and happy republic. Steadily as the sun she rises to her meridian, diffusing light and genial heat over all the nations of the globe :—a terror to those only, who live by deeds of darkness ; but the admiration of all intelligent well wishers of the human race. Arrived at her zenith may she there remain till man himself shall cease to be, and time exist no more.

Once more a year has rolled round, and we meet again, to remind each other, and our children, of those brave men, who, long having groaned under the rod of foreign oppression, and patiently borne every indignity which crowned ambition, and mitred rapacity could heap upon them, rose in the majesty of a peoples' strength, determined to be free, and in defiance of Britain's huge and veteran power, dared to proclaim to a wonder-struck, and listening world, the long slumbered truth—"All men are born FREE and EQUAL!"

Fifty four years have now passed on, since those brave men, whose blood now flows through all your children's veins, gave to the world this charter of a nation's rights,* and pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, to its support.

Long was their struggle, and their task severe ; still in their darkest hour, the bright torch of liberty led them onward, till the star spangled banner waved o'er every citadel from Maine to Georgia, and their little fleet floated triumphantly on the sea, in defiance of the former "mistress of the ocean."

Who of us can appreciate their risk, their toil, their sufferings, and noble daring ? Had Britain triumphed by her force of arms, her wily policy, or lavished gold ; those who now live

* The declaration of Independence, which lay on the table.

in Memory's brightest page the pride and glory of their country, would scarce have found a man to record their names, except as rebels, traitors to their God and King, unworthy life, and justly punished with an ignoble death.

All this they risked, and more ; their toil and sufferings, their doubts and fears, their hopes and glorious reward are stamped on the historic sheet, treasured in the hearts of all their present posterity, to be handed down through successive generations to endless futurity.

But the virtue, integrity and perseverance of your ancestors, is an endless theme to those whose hearts respond their feelings ; and whose reverence for their virtues is only equalled by admiration of their talents, as displayed in the declaration of our Independence, and the establishment of our free institutions.

A declaration asserting, and institutions guaranteeing the right of all to life, liberty and the uninterrupted pursuit of happiness.

Having paid this just tribute to the memory of your fathers, I leave the beaten track of every day orations, to remind you that your no less heroic mothers bore their full share of the common toil and common danger, and more than their share of torturing suspense, watchful anxiety, privation, and suffering. Yet their hearts were firm, and their hands and time employed in administering to the sick, and nursing and comforting the wounded. By them, were their husbands, brothers and sons stimulated to persevere in the arduous task of freeing their country from the oppression of their powerful, numerous, and well appointed veteran foe ; and while they mourned over those who fell defending the sacred standard of liberty, they rewarded the surviving heroes with their smiles and approbation. Surely then, they, no less than your fathers, deserve to live in the hearts of their children, and to be forever held in a nation's grateful remembrance.

Now let us enquire how their sons have profited by this blood, and toil, and danger. How far they have followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, and what is the present condition of our country.

Should I be referred to subsequent war, when, in a period of great public excitement your ships fearlessly cruised the ocean, and your militia at Orleans swept the plain, I should justly acquit you of neglect of your birth-right ; and acknowledge that you had indeed nobly proved your ancestry, and bravely supported the character and dignity of freemen ; but in war we have our homes, our wives, our children, our property and

liberty to defend ; common danger stimulates to exertion and compels to union. In peace, this liberty is to be *preserved*, and we, unsuspecting of danger, are liable to be lulled into a fancied security, till foreign influence and domestic ambition wrest it from us, and forge us fetters tenfold stronger than before.

To encourage you in imagined security then, while the times warn us of increasing danger, to increase this popular delusion, believing it to be such, I hold as treason to the state : enough are there to flatter us for the popular suffrage, enough ready and willing to laud our very *vices* to win their meed of popular applause. I care for neither, I seek but the good of the country of my adoption, and in her prosperity the happiness of myself and fellow citizens. And is there no danger threatened to this republic ? Are my fears that our liberties are endangered, my convictions that our rights are only imperfectly enjoyed, but the jealous wanderings of a disordered brain ?

If this be so, then is a restricted and shackled public press, a sign of freedom.

If this be so, then is luxurious indolence, the stately mansion, the splendid equipage, the often purse-proud insolence of their possessor, emblems of republican simplicity.

If this be so, then do not men more seek wealth, than the enjoyment of their rights, and the preservation of their liberties.

If this be so, then the over toiled labourer, who by his utmost exertion, can scarce provide food and shelter for his children, the widow and orphan struggling for a precarious subsistence in an unfeeling world, while their fellow citizens revel in luxurious abundance, are so many examples of equality.

If this be so, then *the punishment of poverty with greater rigour than we punish crime*, is just, and consistent with our republican institutions.

If this be so, then are our multiplied jails, for the imprisonment of the poor unfortunate debtor, and the greatly tempted criminal ; the increased severity of our prison discipline, the protest of unimprisoned workmen against criminals interfering with their labour and means of subsistence ; the erection of houses of Industry to punish for juvenile crimes, instead of Schools of Industry to prevent their commission ; the building of Alms-houses to increase the number and indolence of paupers, instead of purchasing state farms on which they might support themselves by their own industry, are so many proofs of increased virtue of the people, and wisdom and integrity of our legislators.

But if the apprehension of threatened danger to our liberties, and certain conviction of the unpossession and unenjoyment of

our rights, are not the flutterings of a distempered brain ; then, as we value freedom should we unite for its enjoyment, and as we love liberty and our free institutions, preserve and hand them down uncorrupted, to the next generation.

In the early settlement of this country, when your ancestors, seeking an asylum from the religious persecutions of an Elizabeth and her successors, first landed on these shores, then an uncultivated wilderness, their love of freedom and sterling virtue, induced them to bear every privation and suffering, even to death, rather than remain in, or return to, a country where their rights were invaded and their liberties abridged. Contenting themselves with the gratification of their natural wants, as circumstances could these supply, so were they happy. Among them the principle of self interest and competition had as yet found no place. Idleness and luxuriance they had left behind them, an ocean rolled between; their hearts were social, not isolated; their finest sensibilities awakened, not blunted; their most generous impulses indulged, not destroyed; their toil they shared alike, and, *in accordance with the practice of the early christians, they held all their property in common*, for several years after their arrival. Then occupations the most useful and necessary, were justly estimated ; the cultivator of the soil, the mechanic and the manufacturer, to whom collectively we are indebted for all the necessaries and comforts of life, were honoured and respected ; endured no additional privations because by the labour of their hands and sweat of their brow they contributed to the general support ; experienced not the contempt of the thoughtless nor the contumely of the proud ; for all knew the value of the labourer, and none dwelt among them who lived by their vices, their quarrels, their crimes, nor their hypocrisy. Industry and honesty then received public approbation ; and in that virtuous community, their just reward ; the superstitions of the people only debased their minds and made them in turn persecutors of their dissentient brethren.

But we speak of their virtues, not of their faults ; of their wisdom, not of their folly ; of their political arrangements for their common good, not of their religious rites, ceremonies nor superstitions ; enough are found not only to calumniate the living, but to narrate and magnify the errors even of the illustrious dead.

Two hundred years have passed ; and where find we their virtue ; their simplicity, their equality, and sacred devotion to liberty ? Where the log hut, the armed husbandman, the forest of a million years growth, the rugged bear, the ravenous wolf, the timid deer, the Indian's wigwam or the Indians' self ? His

wife, his offspring—where ? But no, I will not urge this question. I wish not now to awaken your sympathies for a brave and fallen race, the original possessors of this soil. I wish not to remind you that our greatness was their destruction, our increase their annihilation. I wish not to mar the pleasure of this day by retrospection of the past. I only think and feel that they were here, free as the deer they pursued, happy in the embrace of their wives and little ones ; and now—they are gone, for ever.

Two hundred years have passed, and where find we the seed of liberty your fathers planted ? Its roots, struck deep in the earth, have ramified from North to South, from East to West, suffering nothing to divert their course ; hill, dale, mountain, river, sea and ocean, have they perseveringly traversed, and sent forth their shoots in every land ; while her towering and outspreading branches o'er shadow every clime, and scatter her seeds on every soil. Such has the growth of two hundred years made this great and flourishing republic, and for the last fifty years she has stood as the sun in his bright system, shining steadily by her own light, while that of the republics around have been frequently obscured by their own revolutions.

We would not draw invidious comparisons between ourselves and less fortunate nations, we would not triumph over, but rather sympathise in their misfortunes : our mutual cause is that of Virtue, Liberty and Independence ; our mutual enemies, Kings, Priests and Aristocrats. But the experience of others is oft of service to ourselves, and the means which the enslavers of mankind use to effect their object with one people, will be used to destroy the liberty of others. In 1789, France, in imitation of this nation, by a union of her strength, and urged by those who had fought the battles of this republic, snapped the chains of her long continued slavery, and with one effort freed herself from the oppression of her nobles, priests and kings.—Europe stood amazed ! this shock within her bosom had nearly overpowered her, its undulations were felt not only on the continent, but in the neighboring isles. Kings trembled on their thrones ; crowns, coronets, mitres, tottered on their wearer's brows, and all the gaudy trappings of a court were but the insignia of a near destruction.

But vice triumphed ; and France was doomed to expiate her sin against tyranny and usurpation, by rivers of the purest blood ; what force could not effect, cunning accomplished.

“ Perhaps,” says an able writer,* “ there is no great political event that has ever been so grossly—and, I fear, so wilfully—

*R. D. O. Editor of the New York Free Enquirer

misrepresented as the French Revolution. Never was a more noble nor a more unfortunate struggle to put down tyranny, and intolerance, and injustice, and to replace a cruel despotism by a republic founded on the rights and the liberties of its citizens. Never was there a period when the power of truth and of justice shone more conspicuously than in the first months of that revolution. Never, perhaps, was there a public body at once more daring, more honest, and more moderate, than the National Assembly of 1789; nor ever, probably, did a political party exhibit more sincere devotion to a good cause, than did the brave and unfortunate Girondists.

But times of great excitement are unfavorable to sober judgment; and, in default of experience, men are apt from one extreme to run into the opposite. Thus did excesses originate among the French republican party, by which their subtle adversaries were but too ready to profit.

At first, the extravagancies committed by those who had escaped from the thralldom of legitimate oppression, were carefully exaggerated into atrocities. Throughout all the other nations of Europe, men's fears were excited, and men's heads were turned by visions of murder and rapine.

But a surer expedient yet remained. Emissaries were sent from Great Britain and from other European courts, to fan the flame of extravagance, and to push the most reckless and violent among the Revolutionary democrats to unheard-of acts of injustice and cruelty. The celebrated Pinel, of Paris, was called, in his capacity of physician, to attend a member of one of the principal revolutionary committees; a man who had distinguished himself as the abettor and perpetrator of some of the worst atrocities that stained the annals of that eventful period. The patient eagerly enquired what Pinel thought of his case; requesting, as an act of friendship, that danger, if there were any, might not be concealed from him. Pinel replied by advising him, if he had yet business to arrange, not to delay an hour in settling it. The dying man appeared to be deeply affected with his situation; and Pinel, who had ever been a true and staunch republican, even from the first attack on the Bastille in which he personally assisted—thought the moment favorable to obtain some insight into the motives that had prompted the chief actors in the revolutionary tragedy. "Sir" he said, addressing his patient, "I would fain ask you a question; but it may be a painful one." "Ask it," replied the other; "my time here is short, and I have nothing that I need conceal now." "Then" resumed Pinel, "I would ask what possible motive you could

have had to enact, under the guise of republicanism, the bloody horrors that have ruined our cause." "Your question is easily answered," returned the sick man; "I had a pension of six thousand francs sent to me from England regularly by Louis." Disguised as zealous republicans, these tools of a corrupt aristocracy secretly instigated, and sometimes openly perpetrated, the very atrocities, which their masters afterwards held up with well feigned horror, to the execration of their deluded subjects.

These assertions are not made lightly, nor without sufficient authority. They are made on the authority of one, who learnt in the American revolution the value of liberty, and then returned to aid France in a similar attempt; and who has been, alternately and deservedly, the idol of our country and of his own. They will not be found in most of the histories of that eventful period; in part, because such facts as these are not very generally known; and, in part, because there are historians who do know, and yet choose to conceal them.

It is true, that if the French Revolutionists had preserved throughout, the wisdom and the moderation that characterized their first efforts, no power on earth could have destroyed their republic, or prevented the downfall of all neighboring despotisms by the gradual diffusion, throughout Europe, of revolutionary principles. But it is also true, that, but for the unjust and interested interference of foreigners, the French republic would have lived through its errors; and taught by experience to avoid equally the extremes of anarchy and of despotism, would have settled down into a bright example of what a nation may become, when it recognises and asserts the rights of mankind.

But foreign interference, seemed, for a time, to turn the blessing to a curse. The reign of terror was hurried on, and all Europe rung with its horrors; in themselves sufficiently disgusting, but exaggerated into a thousand shapes of gratuitous deformity, by the interested supporters of the powers that be. Liberty and Equality, instead of the stirring watch-word that roused and rallied millions round the Standard of Truth, became a by-word and a bug-bear to frighten the sturdy sons of Freedom, if they but moved a finger, or ventured a step. The Rights of Man meant something very impious; and Reason was spoken of almost with horror.

To a superficial observer it appeared that the cause of liberty lost ground, day by day. The eager Legitimists seemed so well to profit by their enemies' blunders, that the blow which had been struck for freedom recoiled on those who struck it:

and the chain which had been snapt and thrown aside, seemed more strongly rivetted than ever.

But it was in appearance only that freedom and justice were losers. The gnarled roots of custom and prejudice, and prerogative, had been torn and loosened; and though the first blast of the tempest had passed over, and the ancient tree which had bent before it, stood once more erect, yet many a goodly bough was rent from it, and the wreck that remained was destined never to recover its former freshness or vigour. Opinions were then broached and principles promulgated which may continue in disrepute for a time; but they have already taken root in this country, in Great Britain, and in other European nations. And sooner or later, they will be known and appreciated and adopted over the civilized world."

Had the French nation generally been more intelligent, foreign intrigue and influence would have failed in their effect, and France would have been at this day, the mother republic of the European nations around her. Still may we hope however, that this great nation will some day be what, but for intrigue, she would have been now—and still do we hope to see her sons enjoying their long sought liberty and freedom:—

"Yet, Freedom! Yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind:
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North:
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth."

From France in chronological order, we pass to the republics of Southern America, and find, that though they have driven the foreign soldier from their soil, though Ferdinand's cannon no longer roars upon their plains, nor echoes from their mountains, though their fields are no more trodden, nor towns destroyed by the armed minions of a despotic king, yet freedom is not enjoyed. Ignorance and Superstition there reign in giant strength, and those beautiful climes are the abode of anarchy, confusion, and domestic strife. So true it is, that bondage of the human mind is a greater subjugator of the human race than fleets and armies: and the individuals who would perpetuate this bondage, are ever those who live on the labour and credulity of others. But our Southern neighbors have discovered the cause of their dissensions, and are now engaged in applying an effectual remedy.

The spirited exertions of Gen. Morazan at Guatemala, in

thoroughly purging the country of all those individuals who were leaders in the late bloody and disastrous civil war, (all of whom belonged to the party termed Aristocrats) had been productive of the most important results in quieting the country. Among those expelled were the Bishops and about ninety Clergymen and Friars. The whole mass of the Clergy (with scarcely an exception) are royalists, and to them can be traced, directly or indirectly, the whole cause of the late devastating civil war. They appear to be afraid the people will gain too much light, and thereby shake off the mass of superstition and bigotry which enveloped their religion; but the main body of the people are tired of this priest-ridden policy, and are determined the Civil Power shall supersede the Ecclesiastical."

We therefore hail the near approach of mental as well as political freedom in the south; and turning to suffering Greece, find this relic of a great nation, after a long and painful struggle for freedom, about to experience, by the interposition of a holy alliance, a change of masters!—Oh ambition! thou foe of the human race! will thy reign never end on earth? Will ye always plead a right divine, to rob, oppress, and enslave mankind? Will superstition, so interwoven with thy existence, so necessary to thy support, never wing its way from this (freed from its influence,) peaceful earth? Shall we never hail its flight as the precursor of your own downfall? Yes, the time will come, the day is approaching, when reason shall preside over the destinies of men, their rights be known by all, acknowledged by all, respected by all, and when the whole human family shall unite as brethren beneath the star spangled banner of freedom.

Now return we to the home and the graves of your fathers. Now return we to view the improvement of their son's inheritance, to see how they estimate the precious gift, how they have maintained their father's pledge, and to witness a nation's pious gratitude. For these we look not to the mirth of a day, the revelry of an hour, the martial music sweetly floating on the breeze, the pageantry of military parade, nor will we measure a nation's gratitude by the height of the commenced, but unfinished monument, on yonder hill.* We look for the fruits of the seeds they planted in the improvement and condition of their sons, in their moral courage, their virtuous actions, their devotion to Liberty, and in the diffusion of equal intelligence and of general happiness. We have seen, in our slight review of other republics, that to ignorance, as the main cause, we may attribute the perpetuation of their bondage, and we shall ever

* Bunker Hill.

find nations easy victims to the ambitious and intriguing, in proportion as knowledge is unequally diffused among the people.

But we need not visit other nations for proofs of this fact. Our own will unfortunately furnish ample testimony. Who in this republic, are the most ignorant, the most mentally and physically enslaved, and the most morally degraded? Who? Need I answer? The black sons of oppression in our southern states. No. Let me not add slander to their sufferings. They may be the most ignorant and enslaved, but their depravity is virtue, compared to his who sells his own blood, and dooms to perpetual slavery his own offspring, because it is tinged with the sable hue of its mother. Well do our southern legislators know the debasing effect of ignorance. Well do they know that the instruction of their blacks would be their freedom; for if they but knew their rights, they possess the physical force to obtain them. Hence the attempt to give them information is made a crime, and punished with the utmost rigour, even unto death.† But while we mention these facts with regret, and as a disgrace to the nation, we mean not to boast of our own philanthropy which at present has been exhibited in little else than words. The blacks of right should be freed, but they are ignorant and degraded, incapable of enjoying their freedom in their present state, as witnessed by the mass of blacks scattered throughout our free states, whose condition is worse than that of the generality of slaves. Nor is their condition much, if any improved, by sending them to the sickly climate of Liberia. They should be free. It is their right; and but for tyranny they would be so born. They should be free, but we must qualify them to enjoy their freedom, by cultivating their minds and morals, and settle them on lands, where they may by their industry, provide for their present and future wants, and be freed from the temptation to crime which they experience in our cities. Our limits will not permit me to detail a plan for the accomplishment of this good work. I can only suggest that we might, much better than in words, exhibit our negro philanthropy; by begging or purchasing infant negro children (from the care and expense of whom, many of their possessors would be most willingly freed,) placing these children in schools according to their ages; cultivating their minds and bodies; teaching them by their industry to support themselves, and they remaining in these agricultural schools till of age, would in after years do more than repay the expense of their early and subsequent education and support. This thought however slightly sketched, may not be unworthy the attention of all good men and honest republicans, who must ever regret

† See Laws of S. Carolina and Louisiana.

that any should exist in our land who enjoy not their rights ; that ignorance should threaten our national prosperity, or slavery tarnish our national greatness. The standard of a republican nation's greatness, is not standing armies nor large fleets, but its intelligence. The criterion of a nation's virtue is its happiness.

By these may we measure our present condition, and estimate our hopes of the future.

The Constitution of these United States, secures to every citizen, liberty of person, of speech, and of the press ; and freedom of action wherein it interferes not with the rights of others.

Based on a knowledge of the powers of the human mind, on the conviction that since man cannot controul his opinions at will, nor force his mind to assent to any proposition but by the evidence afforded, he cannot be accountable to any one for them, however erroneous they may be ; it wisely guarantees to all, as a *right*, their free expression ; and the word *toleration* is only retained in our vocabularies in memory of the ignorance of the past, and the folly or injustice of the rulers of other nations. You all know how dearly this liberty was purchased ; and surely only purchased to be enjoyed. You all know for whom it was purchased. Surely not for themselves only, and their children of that generation ; but for their posterity to the remotest periods of time, and for the persecuted of every nation, who fleeing from the oppression of kings, seek safety and protection in this land of freedom.

Could your fathers have supposed that in less than fifty years after the signing that instrument, their children should be even partially deprived of their liberty, and that, not by laws, nor force of arms ;—not by invasion of foreign foe, nor edict of foreign prince ; but by erroneous public opinion and unjust action of their own descendants ; could they have known this, it would have damped their spirits, unnerved their arms, paralyzed their exertions, and brought down their grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

Could they have dreamed that they who exercised this right so guaranteed to them, should, in so short a time, or ever, be denounced as enemies to the country, assailed in their reputation, have their usefulness and influence much lessened, if not destroyed, and every means used which cunning could invent, to lower them in the public estimation, and to compel them to silence, or to deprive them of their daily bread ; could they, I say, so have dreamed, and further dreamed that their own offspring were such traitors to their country, they would have denied their legitimacy, and living now, would ship the spurious race to some more genial clime, to play the petty tyrant to each other.

Could your fathers have imagined that in this early day, or at a future period, any of their children should possess so little of their noble spirit as to *fear* to avail themselves of their rights, to exercise their guaranteed privileges ; or that any would bow submissively and unresistingly to the unjust usurpations of their fellow citizens ; could they have so imagined, and living now, they would spurn such recreant beings from their feet, and disown them as unworthy of their illustrious ancestry. Yet so it is—Fashion blinds the reason, and fear destroys the judgment ; we live, and move, and look, and think ; but how few, thinking unfashionably, dare freely give utterance to their unpopular opinions. Numbers and influence are with us now considered the measure of truth, and fear and fashion make us freemen—coward, cringing, and obsequious slaves.

" ALL things are weighed in customs' falsest scale ;
 Opinion an omnipotence—whose veil
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
 And their free thoughts be crime, and earth have too much light."

Yet this bondage of the mind, this deprivation of our liberty is of our own permitting. No constitutional law exists to take cognizance of free expressions, be they intolerant or liberal, foolish or wise. No constitutional law exists, thanks to the spirit and blood of your forefathers, by which our mouths may be stopped or our persons imprisoned ; but we have, through supineness, neglect and fear, suffered ambitious and designing men to establish a secret inquisition throughout our land ; members of which, periodically visit our dwellings, noting and secretly proscribing those who refuse to increase their funds and to aid them in drawing closer their meshes around us. We have suffered them to influence our legislatures, and to cause portions of sectarian creeds to be engrafted on our otherwise purely moral and political institutions. We have suffered them to generate an intolerance of feeling which often destroys the social relation, engenders within the bosoms of the same family, the most bitter and inveterate strife, even to the destruction of maternal affection and to the disowning of children by their fathers, and so to stimulate their followers and the public press to slander and otherwise persecute their fellow citizens for expressed difference of opinion, that it requires a considerable degree of moral courage, particularly in females, to exercise our rights, and to free ourselves from the fetters with which we are bound.

Yet are there some ; some of each sex now present, and the

number is rapidly increasing, who know their rights ; who have burst the icy trammels of superstition ; and who, breathing the pure spirit of their revolutionary parents dare to stand forth to the world, the advocates of mental and political freedom. Yes, fortunately for the cause of liberty, there are some who will not barter their birthright to secure their pottage ; for much danger is hovering over our land, which is the more to be dreaded because not generally apprehended ; a danger that threatens to deprive us of the liberty we enjoy, if not averted by the early awakening of the people ; and that subjugation which foreign ambition could not obtain by force, may yet be obtained by fraud.

Throughout the whole of these states an extensive ecclesiastical combination exists, which simultaneously petitioned congress at the last session, to break the constitution of '39, and legislate on a religious subject. You are aware how their plans were for the time defeated by the honest republican, Richard M. Johnson. Defeat only stimulated their zeal and their exertions ; but convinced by it, that this nation was not so degenerate as to submit to this open violation of its chartered rights, and that their influence was not sufficient to enforce their plan in opposition to the public will, they counselled together, and changed the mode of their present operations to ensure success to their future.

Under an appearance of extended liberality, we find these former persecutors, and still haters of dissentient sects, extending the hand of fellowship to all who do not doubt or question the utility of their calling : thereby to increase their strength, obtain their object, and then, being the most numerous sect, they may think they stretch their liberality too far and exceed divine authority even to tolerate the expression of opinions not found in Calvins' institutes, or the Westminster confession of faith ? In furtherance of their object, immense sums of money are solicited and obtained, in part for future exigencies, and in part to publish and disseminate tracts to prepare the public mind for any and every object they may desire to accomplish. But their main exertions are directed towards, and their main reliance is upon the rising generation, educated in their Sabbath Schools. " These in ten years," say they, " will form the main body and the most active members of the American people ; and then, if we are cautious now, and arouse not the slumbering spirit of '76, we shall be able to obtain our heart's desire, place any pious man we please in the presidential chair, and put an end to this free expression of opinion, which endangers our official existence.

With this view they solicit every child they see, to enter their

sabbath schools, already far too numerous ; and by a late vote of their synod in Philadelphia, they are pledged to establish one in every unprovided town and village in the great valley of the Mississippi, extending from the Alleghanies, westward to the rocky mountains, south to New Orleans, and embracing the most fertile regions of our country, and a numerous industrious and enterprising population.

Such are their views, and with these views their plans are laid in wisdom ; too feeble to attempt to obtain them now by force, they hope to succeed by cunning ; and having justly estimated the powers of the human mind, knowing there is but one means of its enslavement, that means, *by education*, they eagerly collect all the children together, drill them in their creeds, prejudices and sectarian feelings, so that when they become men and women they will be fit instruments of their ambition, and willing tools for the accomplishment of their designs. Were their motives pure, I should applaud their zeal. Were their motives good, I should urge you to follow their example, and aid them in their great undertaking. Were it knowledge they taught, and not creeds, what lover of his country would not wish them success ? Were their sabbath schools established to teach children, and men and women, the duties they owe to each other, as fellow men : to teach them the nature of our institutions, to create a spirit of kindness to every man, of every sect, and of every clime, to the Mahometan, Jew and sceptic, as to the believer ; and to impart to the working classes, that knowledge of men and things which their limited instruction in the common schools has not afforded, and their limited time and means in after life prevent them from obtaining ; it would indeed be something worthy our approbation, and they would, by the wise and good, be justly hailed as the benefactors of mankind. But fellow citizens, this is unfortunately not their object ; other ends have they in view ; and party feelings and intolerance are necessary to their accomplishment. As lovers of our country then, we most sincerely hope, that with all their cunning, contrivance and exertion, they will receive an early and total defeat.

There is a redeeming spirit in the people, which will yet preserve our republic from every threatened danger, foreign and domestic. There is a redeeming spirit widely diffusing itself through this nation, as manifested in the altered tone of the public press generally ; and more particularly in the increasing number of those papers, which devoted to the support and perpetuation of the free institutions of our country will not lend their columns to religious or irreligious intolerance. Papers that serve no sect, acknowledge no party, but whose editors

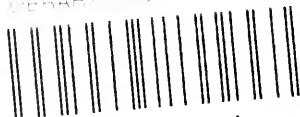
devote their able pens and useful columns to the service of the people, to the improvement of their condition, and to the common good of the republic ; foremost in this noble work we may rank the New York Daily Sentinel, the Free Enquirer, and the Alabama Spirit of the Age.

There is a redeeming spirit abroad, which is even now rousing the people to the consideration of their rights, and to the means of obtaining and preserving them. This spirit is the increasing intelligence of the people. It is this general increase of intelligence only, that can preserve our federal constitution inviolate, and hand it down to posterity unimpaired. This state has done more for her citizens by education, than any state in the union, and they are proverbially more intelligent and more virtuous, the liberality of the people even outstripping her constitution and antiquated laws. But she has still much to perform, the pioneer in every good and liberal work, she must give to the union a better system of education, a system, good enough for the rich, and not too good for the poor ; a republican system, which shall give to the children of the poor, equal advantages of instruction, equal opportunities of arriving at eminence, with the children of the rich, for liberty and equality can only dwell where all have equal advantages of education ; a practical system, which shall not only convey a knowledge of words, but also of the properties and qualities of things ; a system that shall debase none, but elevate all ; that shall lead all to observe and think, and to treat each other as fellow beings, and children of one republican family ; but above all, a system that shall equally well cultivate the female mind with that of the male, and qualify them to be the early instructors of their children. Then will our liberties be placed on a pedestal which no machinations of ambitious clergy, nor intrigues of foreign despots can undermine. Then will our future legislators, legislate with wisdom and in accordance with the spirit of our institutions. Then will the press be free and not aid in perpetuating ignorance and error. Then will public opinion, if it sit in judgment at all, judge with candor and censure with caution. Then will no man fear to express his honest opinions, nor will any be slandered or persecuted for the exercise of his constitutional rights. Then will all other departures from our constitution be remedied and we shall redeem the pledge your fathers have given. Then will ye have fully proved your parentage, and yourselves worthy of your inheritance. Then peace, happiness and good will to man will reign on this portion of the earth, and every reflective mind will consider it an honour, as with our present hopes I now do, to be a citizen of these United States.





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